

Widow Clarke House
Cook County
Chicago, Illinois

HABS - Ill.-135

HABS
ILL,
16-CHIG,
4-

Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. Ill.1.

Historic American Buildings Survey
Earl H. Reed, District Officer
435 North Michigan Ave., Chicago

THE WIDOW CLARKE HOUSE
Chicago, Cook County, Illinois

HABS
ILL,
16-CHIG,
4-

Owner: Mrs. Mary Walter.

Date of Erection: 1836.

Architect: Unknown. (Assumed to a pioneer carpenter-architect).

Builder: Henry B. Clarke.

Present Condition: Good.

Number of Stories: Two.

Materials of Construction: Foundation brick, wood exterior; in 1872 it was moved and the porticos were removed, orientation remained the same.

Other Existing Records: Photographs, "Ante-Fire Book", Chicago Title and Trust Co., Book #229, Page 620.

Additional data: (See following pages).

THE WIDOW CLARKE HOUSE
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DISTRICT NO. ILL. 1.
NORTHERN ILLINOIS

EARL H. REED
DISTRICT OFFICER

Project No. Ill. 135

Richard J. Wall
H. Stewart Leonard.

SOURCE

Chicago Title & Trust Co. "Ante Fire Book" Book 229, p. 620. The property on which this house was built was first conveyed to Elijah D. Harmon by a deed from the President of the United States, under the date of March 16, 1837. This tract of land, known as the southwest quarter of Section 22-39-14 changed hands frequently from this time until July 11, 1860 when Caroline Clarke, widow of the builder, lost the property to the Master in Chancery, through foreclosure. Up to this time the property had remained intact and after this a period of subdivision set in.

Recollections of Mrs. Mary Walter. The property had passed through several hands shortly before and after the time of the building, which was undertaken by Henry B. Clarke in 1836. After his death (In the cholera epidemic of 1839), the house belonged to his widow who sold it to Mr. John Chrimes in 1872. Mr. Chrimes moved it from its former location to its present site at 4526 South Wabash Avenue. The present owner and occupant is Mrs. Mary Walter who was born in Chicago in 1859.

When the house was built, Michigan Avenue did not extend beyond 12th Street, consequently the house was not oriented to any street, but was located on the pike or trail which followed the curve of Lake Michigan as it stretched south. After the streets had been laid out the house was found on Block 2, between State Street and the Lake and 16th, or North Street, and 18th, or Old Street. The varying addresses given for this building in the Chicago Directories of the period reflect the city's growth and striving for regularity.

The house was built by, it must be assumed, a pioneer carpenter-architect. It was one of the two most pretentious houses

in Chicago, the other being the William B. Ogden house which was designed by John M. VanOsdel, then of New York, and erected in the same year. When the house was moved in 1872 the porticos were removed but the orientation of the house remained as before.

List of Owners

Owners	How acquired	date acquired.
U.S.A.		
Elijah D. Harmon	Land Grant	3-16-37*
Chas.L.Harmon	From Prev.owner	10-21-34
Henry B.Clarke	" " "	16-18-35
Almond Walker	Foreclosure	9-14-40
Caroline Clarke	Previous owner	2-5-50
H.W.Clarke	" "	1-23-51
Caroline Clarke	following a series of foreclosures	8-23-59
Chas. D. Palmer	Foreclosure	7-11-60
Subdivided		12-22-62

* Property evidently changed possession before title to land was granted by U.S.A.

Above information from "Ante-Fire Book", Chicago Title and Trust Co., Book #229, Page 620. Listed there as the Clarke sub-division and is still known as S.W. quarter 22-39-14. Information furnished by Wm. Fehrmann and Robert Janusch of the Chicago Title and Trust Co. Property noted as the C.P. Clarke Sub-division of 177' of west 1/2 block #2.

By Richard Wall

Approved Earl Jones